

VZCZCXRO9570
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHTV #1844/01 1701425
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 191425Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1788
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0053

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 001844

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR
WILLIAMS/SHAMPAINE/STEINGER; NSC FOR ABRAMS/WATERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: GOI UPDATE ON CROSSINGS AND FUEL SITUATION IN GAZA

Sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: COGAT confirmed to EconOff on June 19 that most of the Gaza border crossings are effectively closed. However, the GOI is facilitating import of humanitarian goods into Gaza through the Kerem Shalom cargo crossing and working on an alternate mechanism at Erez crossing point to assist people to exit Gaza on a humanitarian basis. GOI contacts said that they were exploring opening an alternate route for passengers to cross Erez and having an independent organization -- such as the ICRC -- serve as an administrative authority on the Palestinian side. As for commercial goods, GOI contacts reported that there is still no Palestinian counterpart at Karni, but that pressure was mounting to re-open the cargo terminal -- especially from Israeli fruit growers who export to Gaza and are losing money as a result of the glut of fruit on the Israeli market due to the closure at Karni. Finally, contacts at the Israeli Fuel Authority and at Dor Alon told EconOff that Dor Alon had resumed shipments of all petroleum products into Gaza through the Nahal Oz crossing June 18. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Lt. Col. Daniel Beaudoin, Deputy of the Foreign Relations Branch of the office of the Coordinator of Government Affairs in the Territories (COGAT), confirmed to EconCouns on June 19 that although most of the border crossings are effectively closed, the GOI is facilitating import of humanitarian goods into Gaza and working on a mechanism to assist people to exit Gaza on a humanitarian basis.

FACILITATING HUMANITARIAN CASES AT EREZ

3. (SBU) Maj. Peter Lerner, Head of International Relations at Erez Crossing Point, told EconOff that Erez was briefly open on June 18 for pedestrian traffic with special coordination, but was closed after a large crowd of Palestinians attempting to flee Gaza rushed the crossing. Lerner observed that the main Palestinian point of contact with whom the GOI normally coordinates movement of people through the crossing had "disappeared," leaving the Crossings Authority without a Palestinian counterpart. As a result, virtually anyone could queue up at Erez, and approximately 200 people -- including refugees, people with valid permits, and foreign nationals -- were stranded at the crossing, which was closed due to the crowding. The GOI provided food and water for those stranded, and has planned a "pilot alternate mechanism" to allow humanitarian cases, journalists, and foreign nationals -- including U.S. citizens -- through the crossing point via a single pedestrian passenger lane. GOI contacts indicated that if the pilot crossing scheme works,

it might be expanded at a later date. However, no Israeli contact could explain how this alternate lane for egress from Gaza would be secured.

14. (SBU) Independently, Gen. (ret) Baruch Spiegel of the Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF) told EconCouns that the GOI was exploring opening an alternate route for passengers to cross Erez and having an independent organization -- such as the ICRC -- serve as an administrative authority on the Palestinian side. Spiegel commented that independent organizations in Gaza currently do not have sufficient personnel or expertise to carry out such a task, but that the GOI was formulating a plan of action.

PRESSURE TO OPEN KARNI

15. (SBU) Spiegel also said that Abu Nabil, the GOI's Palestinian point of contact for Karni, has been trying to re-establish his place at Karni. NGO contacts told us that Israeli fruit growers -- especially those in the Galilee who export to Gaza -- have been pressuring the GOI to re-open Karni because the resulting glut of fruit on the Israeli market has caused prices to fall and has cost farmers almost USD 5 million in lost profits.

KEREM SHALOM

16. (U) COGAT contacts confirmed to EconOff that the GOI had opened the Kerem Shalom cargo crossing point June 19 for the following humanitarian goods to be brought into Gaza:

TEL AVIV 00001844 002 OF 002

-- ten truckloads of food from the World Food Programme;
-- one truckload of medical supplies from the World Health Organization;
-- two truckloads of medical supplies from the ICRC.

In addition, UNICEF plans to include 36 boxes of vaccinations in another consignment scheduled for June 20.

FUEL IMPORTS

17. (SBU) Ehud Yichieli of the Israel Fuel Authority told EconOff that Dor Alon had resumed shipments of all petroleum products into Gaza through the Nahal Oz crossing June 18. Dismissing press reports as "exaggeration," he said that the gasoline supply was briefly reduced -- at the request of the PA -- after it became apparent that Hamas forces had taken over Gaza. Eli Misav, Director of Technology at Dor Alon, acknowledged that the company's management was worried that it would not receive payment from the Palestinians, but emphasized that the company was coordinating with the GOI to avoid a humanitarian crisis and to ensure that the population in Gaza would continue to receive fuel. (Note: According to NGO sources, new Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad had paid Dor Alon in advance in order to ensure that fuel shipments to Gaza continued. End note.) Yichieli confirmed to EconOff that the following was brought into Gaza on June 18 via Nahal Oz:

-- cooking gas (eight truckloads totaling 200 tons);
-- benzene (four truckloads totaling 200,000 liters);
-- diesel for power plant (seven truckloads totaling 300,000 liters);
-- diesel (12 truckloads totaling 547,000 liters).

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's
Classified SIPRNET website.

CRETZ